O, Wretched Man That I Am!

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
Romans 7:24 (KJV)

Something that is rarely discussed within the 'feel good' religious system is our inherent wretchedness. Ignorance abounds about our sin nature, some even swear that they are no longer sinners! Confronting our failings as human beings is probably the hardest part of being a follower of Christ, yet it is an absolutely crucial part of our salvation experience.

From womb to tomb every person ever born has suffered from this disease called sin. What separates the Christian from the rest? Is it our desire to stop sinning? No. Although a desire to stop sinning is a crucial part of the Christian experience many have spent a lifetime struggling with their sin nature without making a decision for Christ. Only those totally lacking a conscience will not try to be a 'good person', even the Satanist will follow their own (albeit twisted) moral code.

Is where they err in not adhering to the moral code given to us by God Himself? Again, many do try to follow the ten commandments as best they can. They recognize their inherent wretchedness but look to good deeds or religion to strike a balance between them.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.
Psalms 51:9 (KJV)

So where does Christ fit in exactly? First and foremost of course as the provider of the shed blood that blots out our sins and makes them go away forever. Before we had erasers mistakes were blotted out by using ink to cover them over. But when Jesus blots out our sins He covers and hides them with His own blood! There are many people out there who try their very best to be good, but the tragedy for them is that even their most monumental efforts are all for naught. Only His blood is sufficient for the remission of sins.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.
Mark 2:22 (KJV)

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
Psalms 51:10 (KJV)

Secondly, when we make a sincere decision for Christ we are given a new heart. Now here is where many folks stumble, because that new heart is not a replacement for the old one, but an adversary. That is what God showed me about the wineskin allegory which explains to us why He cannot work with our old wicked hearts of flesh. We still have that dirty old heart, but It is up to us to feed and nurture this new heart we have been given and to starve our old fleshy one.

To sense our inherent wretchedness as Paul did is to merely recognize that our 'old man' is still on the scene and ready to rise up and take us over every moment. This is why I am astounded that any Christian would try to claim they are no longer sinners. Those who do so more often than not also prescribe to the Eternal Security lie.

Somehow their sin is no longer sin anymore, there is no brokenness when they sin. But wait a minute, why are these people not convicted when they sin?

> **Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:**
> **John 16:7-8 (KJV)**

Is it not the Holy Spirit that convicts a Christian when we sin? So what can we surmise about the person who claims they are no longer sinners? Scripture is clear; they are either completely ignoring that still, small voice in their hearts, or it isn't there at all! In Acts chapter seven it was to a group of such people that Stephen spoke. The words he spoke to these Pharisees were not his own, but divinely given by Holy Spirit. Those words so tore their hearts that they rose up and stoned him to death.

They could have repented as the men of Nineveh did under the convicting message of Jonah, but instead they chose to kill the messenger. Indeed, the ultimate example of dying for telling the truth is our savior Jesus Christ. Scripture tells us it was for the sake of jealousy (**Mark 15:9-11 KJV**) that the Pharisees sought to kill Him, not because they thought He was blaspheming. They knew in their hearts He was the Messiah, yet they killed Him to justify themselves! Folks, the Pharisees of today need to hear the truth and the Holy Spirit continues to use people to reprove them.

> **I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**
> **1 Corinthians 9:26-27 (KJV)**

Paul tells us we must not fight our flesh as if we're shadowboxing. But the churches are full of shadow boxers, people who know they shouldn't be sinning but don't sincerely try to stop. Yes, we are all still sinners, but what this new heart does is give us the ability to resist our flesh and have many victories over it.